

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 DAMASC 02716 281542Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 /056 W
-----290336Z 030064 /66

R 281453Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2871
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
RUQMJR XAMCONSUL JERUSALEM 934
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 2716

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR PINT SY ELE
SUBJ: AL-BAATH COLUMNIST REVIEWS POLICY IN LEBANON

1. SUMMARY: EMBOFF APRIL 27 DISCUSSED SYRIA'S ATTITUDE
TOWARDS IMPLEMENTATION CAIRO AGREEMENT WITH SENIOR AL-BAATH
COLUMNIST AMID AL-KHULI WHO WRITES MOST OF HIS PAPER'S
EDITORIALS ON LEBANON. KHULI MADE FOLLOWING POINTS:

--LEBANESE FORCES WOULD BE DESPATCHED TO SOUTH LEBANON
"IN MATTER OF DAYS,"

--SYRIA DID NOT WANT EITHER THE RIGHTISTS OR PALESTINIANS
TO GAIN PREPONDERANCE OF POWER IN SOUTH LEBANON;

--1969 CAIRO ACCORDS WOULD BE IMPLEMENTED IN STAGES;

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 DAMASC 02716 281542Z

--REBUILDING OF LEBANESE INSTITUTIONS, ESPECIALLY THE ARMY,
AND APPLICATION OF CAIRO ACCORDS ON PALESTINIANS SHOULD
PROCEED IN TANDEM BUT DELAY IN IMPLEMENTATION OF ONE
SHOULD NOT SERVE AS PRETEXT FOR HALTING PROGRESS ON OTHER;

--PROGRESS ON ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ISSUES WOULD AID
POLITICAL RECONCILIATION;

--SYRIA WOULD STRIKE AT ANY ELEMENTS WHICH OPPOSED SARKIS

BY FORCE, AND

--SYRIA MAY STILL BE INTERESTED IN EVENTUALLY FORMING

JOINT COMMAND WITH PLO. END SUMMARY.

2. SOUTH LEBANON. KHULI STATED THAT LEBANESE ARMY WOULD BE SENT TO SOUTH IN MATTER OF DAYS AND THAT SYRIA WOULD NOT PERMIT EITHER RIGHTISTS OR PLO FORCES TO GAIN UPPER HAND IN THE REGION. HE SAID THAT ISRAEL WOULD NOT HAVE ANY PRETEXT TO OBJECT TO THIS SINCE SARKIS AS HEAD OF LEGALLY CONSTITUTED GOVERNMENT HAS RIGHT TO DEPLOY HIS FORCES ON HIS SOVEREIGN TERRITORY. HE SAID SYRIA EXPECTED BACKING OF BOTH US AND USSR IN THIS, ESPECIALLY AFTER ASAD'S

TRIP TO MOSCOW.

3. FATAH/SYRIA RELATIONS. KHULI LEFT EMBOFF WITH IMPRESSION THAT FATAH/SYRIA COORDINATION HAD IMPROVED SIGNIFICANTLY IN LEBANON (SEE DAMASCUS 2363). HE CHARACTERIZED THOSE WHO CREATED INCIDENTS IN BEIRUT AS "OPPORTUNISTS" WHO PROFITED FROM CONTINUATION OF FIGHTING. HE SAID ADF HAD SURROUNDED SABRA CAMP BECAUSE SOME ELEMENTS BELONGING TO GANG OF ISAM AL-ARAB, WHOM HE BLAMED FOR KILLING OF TWO SYRIAN OFFICERS, HAD TRIED TO TAKE REFUGE THERE. HE ADDED THAT ADF ALSO WISHED TO PREVENT DISSIDENT
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 DAMASC 02716 281542Z

(PRESUMABLY PL REJECTIONISTS) ELEMENTS FROM EXPLOITING THE SITUATION.

4. CAIRO AGREEMENT. KHULI IMPLIED THAT SYRIA BACKING AWAY FROM SORCEFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF AGREEMENT VIS-A-VIS PALESTINIANS. ACCORDING TO TERMS OF CAIRO AGREEMENT, PLO SUPPOSED TO COORDINATE THE AGREEMENT'S IMPLEMENTATION WITH LEBANESE ARMY, BUT ABSENCE OF EFFECTIVE LEBANESE ARMY MADE QUICK RESULTS DIFFICULT, "SINCE WITH WHOM CAN THE PLO DEAL?" HE ALSO ASSERTED THAT PLO COULD NOT BE LEFT DEFENSELESS WHILE RIGHTWING MILITIAS STILL REMAINED FREE OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT DISCIPLINE. HE BELIEVED MORE HEAVY WEAPONS STILL REMAINED TO BE COLLECTED FROM PALESTINIAN CAMPS BUT THAT "A FEW" SUCH WEAPONS SHOULD BE LEFT FOR PLO SELF-DEFENSE AGAINST ISRAELI ATTACKS. HE SAID REBUILDING OF LEBANESE INSTITUTIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF CAIRO AGREEMENT SHOULD PROCEED SIMULTANEOUSLY BUT SAID THAT IF DIFFICULTIES SLOWED IMPLEMENTATION OF ONE THIS SHOULD NOT SERVE AS PRETEXT TO HALT PROGRESS ON THE OTHER. WHEN EMBOFF ASKED

IF THIS MEANT THAT PALESTINIANS SHOULD NOT POINT TO SLTWNNESS IN RECONSTITUTING ARMY AS EXCUSE TO AVOID CARRYING OUT THE AGREEMENT, HE INDICATED SITUATION WAS THE REVERSE, ASSERTING THAT LEBANESE RIGHTISTS WOULD LIKELY TO DRAG THEIR FEET ON COOPERATING WITH SARKIS IF PALESTINAINS DID NOT FULLY IMPLEMENT CAIRO AGREEMENT ACCORDING TO MARINITE'S STRICT INTERPRETATION. HE INDICATED IT UNREALISTIC TO EXPECT PLO TO UNILATERALLY DISARM. HE SAID THAT CURRENT IDEAS ABOUT NUMBER OF ARMED MEN PER THOUSAND INHABITANTS WERE TOO STRINGENT. HE OPINED THAT FINAL INTERPRETATION WTULD RESTRICT PLO PRESENCE TO CERTAIN WELL DEFINED AREAS IN SOUTH LEBANON, GET THEM BACK INTO THE CAMPS IN REST TF THE COUNTRY, AND GREATLY RESTRICT TYPES OF ARMAMENTS THEY PERMITTED TT MAINTAIN. HE DID NOT BELIEVE NUMBER OF FIGHTERS ALLOWED TO REMAIN IN THE SOUTH WOULD BE RESTRICTED.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 DAMASC 02716 281542Z

5. SARKIS POLICIES. EMBOFF POINTED OUT THAT MUCH OF THIS SEEMED TO RUN COUNTER TO CURRENT THINKING OF LEBANESE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND ASKED HOW THE FOREGOING COULD BE RECONCILED WITH SYRIA'S OFT-STATED ASSERTIONS THAT ADF WOULD FAITHFULLY CARRY OUT SARKIS' ORDERS. AT THIS POINT, KHULI BACKED OFF AND SAID THAT "OF COURSE" THIS WAS TRUE AND THAT HE HAD MERELY BEEN OFFERING HIS "PERSONAL OPINIONS." IF PRES SARKIS WISHED MORE STRINGENT APPROACH, THEN SYRIAN FORCES IN ADF WOULD COMPLY. HE CONCLUDED THAT HE BELIEVED REBUILDING OF ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE WAS PROPER WAY TO PROCEED AT THIS STAGE AND THAT POLITICAL RECONCILIATION WOULD THEN FOLLOW.

6. PLO-SYRIAN JOINT COMMAND. MOST RECENT ISSUE OF MAGAZINE SAWT FALASTIN (VOICE OF PALESTINE) PUBLISHED SPEECH KHULI HAD DELIVERED AT INVITATION OF PLA CONTINGENT STATIONED IN SYRIA. KHULI REMINDED HIS AUDIENCE THAT SHORTLY AFTER PRES ASAD PROPOSED JOINT SYRO-PALESTINIAN COMMAND IN MARCH 1975, LEBANESE WAR BROKE OUT AND UNDERMINED POSSIBILITIES OF REACHING AGREEMENT. IN HIS SPEECH, KHULI APPEARED TO ADVOCATE RECONSIDERATION OF THE WHOLE IDEA. WHEN QUERIED BY EMBOFF ON THE SUBJECT, KHULI CLAIMED TO SEE REAL POSSIBILITY THAT SUCH A PROPOSAL WOULD BE RESURRECTED.

7. COMMENT. KHULI'S EDITORIALS AND PRESUMABLY HIS REMARKS REFLECT GUIDANCE HE RECEIVES FROM SARG. HIS COMMENTARY EXPANDED UPON AND CLARIFIED COLUMNS HE HAS BEEN WRITING FOR PAST SEVERAL WEEKS IMPLYING THAT SARG VIEWS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF CAIRO AGREEMENT HAD EVOLVED IN

DIRECTION MORE FAVORABLE TO PLO "MODERATES." HOWEVER,
KHULI BELIEVES PLO SHOULD SUBORDINATE ITSELF TO SYRIAN
AIMS IN LEBANON.
THEROS

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, PRESS COMMENTS, COMBAT OPERATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 28-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977DAMASC02716
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770149-0739
Format: TEL
From: DAMASCUS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770411/aaaaaims.tel
Line Count: 173
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: a32b3e9c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2670187
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AL-BAATH COLUMNIST REVIEWS POLICY IN LEBANON
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, SY, LE
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/a32b3e9c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009